

# THE *Illustrated London News.*



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1908

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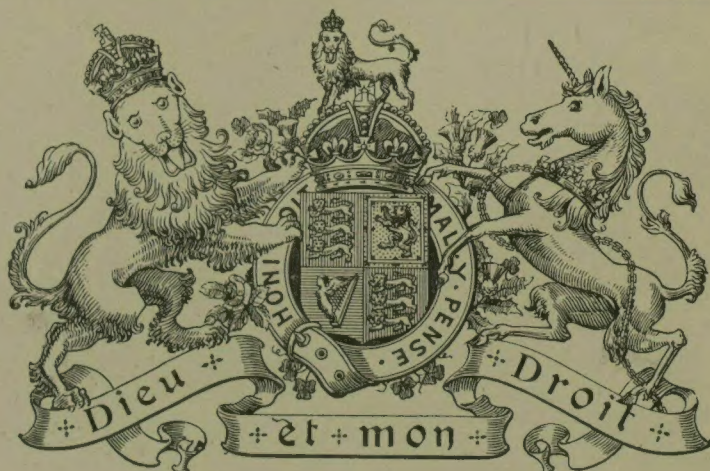
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"...as if he had been a ghost."

## A MOONLIGHT EFFECT.

By WILLIAM J. LOCKE. ILLUSTRATED BY CYRUS CUNEO.

"I WISH Philip were here to-night," sighed the girl.

"I'm sure you do, Winnie," said Mrs. Vanrennen.

"It's so utterly beautiful," said the girl, closing her eyes and drawing in a deep breath of the scented air. "He would enjoy it so much, poor fellow."

Mrs. Vanrennen glanced at her companion and smiled the wise, indulgent smile that only five-and-fifty can bestow on the sweet disingenuousness of youth.

"It would improve his health to get away from the fog and damp of London, wouldn't it?" she said, with a tender touch of mockery, knowing full well that the said Philip was as strong as a young dromedary.

"It would," sighed the girl. "I wish he were in Algiers."

"My dear," said Mrs. Vanrennen, touching the girl's cheek, "if I had a Philip, I too would want to have him by my side on such a night as this, instead of a stupid old woman."

Winnie drew the kind fingers from her cheek and kissed them.

"You understand, don't you, dear Mrs. Vanrennen?"

"Yes," she said, with a little catch in her voice, "I do." And she took in a deep breath of the warm, scented air.

It was a spring night in Mustapha, one of the hills that dominate the town of Algiers, and Algerian springs are the midsummers of paler climes. The moon, hanging in splendour just above the long line of the hotel, flooded the broad

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terrace, and worked a magic of soft light and shadow in the enchanted garden beyond; it silvered the strip of bay that met the horizon, just visible above the trees, and touched with mystery the fairy headland of Cape Matifou. From the garden the perfumes of the South mounted into the hot still night; magnolia and heliotrope and roses mingled with the spicy smells of the eucalyptus trees that stood like majestic beggars wrapped in their rags of bark. The bourgainvillea stretched a great dark stain on the dim white of the hotel, and below it the ground-floor lights showed the bizarre outline of Moorish arches. Vague faint sounds ascended from the far-off Arab town, and now and then from the harbour the distant whistle of a steamer. Three men sitting some yards away talked in low, lazy voices. Otherwise the terrace was silent and deserted; the end of the season had come, and few guests remained in the hotel. It was a languorous, sensuous night. The velvet canopy of the stars drooped amorously over the warm earth.

"My dear," said Mrs. Vanrennen, "marry Philip as soon as you can. Don't wait for better prospects. Don't give up the substance for the shadow, which is a very pale thing and cold comfort."

Said the girl: "You speak so sadly, Mrs. Vanrennen."

"I've had the shadow, dear."

"But you were married."

"Yes, I was married," said Mrs. Vanrennen. She had a remarkable voice, soft and low and musical, a most sensitive instrument wherewith to express shades of feeling. The three little words had a cadence like a lament on the wood-wind. The girl slipped her hand into her companion's, and for a time there was silence. Presently Mrs. Vanrennen shivered, ever so slightly. The girl sprang to her feet.

"I'll go in and fetch you a wrap."

Mrs. Vanrennen murmured a word of thanks, but when the girl had already sped a few yards, she called her back, raising her voice—

"Winnie—the silk one on the dressing-table."

One of the men on the terrace started, looked keenly through the moonlight at the speaker, and rose. He was a tall spare man, with a white moustache; his dinner-jacket hung as on a bony frame, but he held

himself erect, and wore his Homburg hat jauntily cocked on one side. He walked past Mrs. Vanrennen to the end of the terrace, moved two or three paces so as to catch her face full in the moonlight, then, with the air of a man who has made up his mind, marched up to her.

"What a beautiful night!"

Mrs. Vanrennen acquiesced politely. "Yes; an enchanting night."

The man sat down in Winnie's chair.

"I'm sure of it! I've been wondering all the evening—but when you called out loud just now I was certain. There never was anyone with a voice like yours. You're Molly Summers."

"And you? Good Heavens!" She gazed into his face full-eyed, as if he had been a ghost. "Godfrey Deerhurst!"

"Yes," said he.

"I was thinking of you only five minutes ago." Her lips trembled, as she laughed. "Perhaps that was why I recognised you—otherwise—turn your face and let me see."

"I'm afraid thirty years' soldiering has battered it out of all recognition."

Yet he twirled his moustache with a certain complacency and drew himself up as if he hoped she would repudiate the suggestion. She felt this instinctively.

"You're not much changed," she said.

"I think I carry sixty pretty well, don't I?"

"You don't look it. I am fifty-five, and do look it."

He protested gallantly. "Your voice is as young and fresh as when—Good God! how it all comes back—whew! Thirty years ago, and I've not seen you since. Yes, your voice is unchanged, and your eyes are as bright—and your hands are as delicate. You used to have a tiny scar on the middle joint of the ring-finger of your left hand."

She laughed happily, and held out her hand in the moonlight. "I have it still—but you can't see it here. Fancy your remembering."

"Do you think there's anything about Molly Summers that I've forgotten? Gad! I shall never forget the day I came upon you in the cherry orchard—all pale sunlight and white blossom—you in your white dress and your face the most delicate blossom of all. And as I drew near you shook the trees and the blossoms fell about you like snow. Do you remember?"





"Of course I do," she said in a whisper. Does a woman ever forget the delicious terror when for the first time a man's strong arms grip her and his lips crush hers? "But it has never occurred to me," she added simply, "that you gave a passing thought to the cherry blossoms."

She herself had seen nothing in the sun-filled universe but the radiant young Phoebus Apollo himself who had come gloriously triumphant to meet her. This, however, she did not confess, even after the lapse of thirty years.

Winifred tripped up the terrace with the gauze scarf. Mrs. Vanrennen took it with a word of thanks, but laid it on her lap instead of laying it round her shoulders. The old soldier rose courteously. Mrs. Vanrennen stumbled over the introduction.

"Winnie, this is an old friend of mine—Colonel——?" she paused, uncertain.

"General."

"General Deerhurst."

He raised his hat. "I am afraid I have stolen your chair."

"Oh, please sit down," said the girl, "I must go in now."

"And shut yourself up from this beautiful night?"

"I can see it all from my window—in fact, better, for I have a lovely view over the bay. And I must do some writing. Are you staying in the hotel?" she asked politely.

He explained that he had arrived late, after the dinner hour, from Biskra, whence he had been accompanied by his two friends. They were starting for England at some unearthly hour of the morning by the North German Lloyd steamer.

"You're not going to-morrow?" cried Mrs. Vanrennen quickly.

Then her cheeks flamed, and she knew that she was blushing like a girl, and was glad of the kind moonlight.

"Oh! no," he said. "Only my friends. I'm here for a few days. Then I'll get home by Marseilles. I have a return ticket that way."

"So have we," said Mrs. Vanrennen.

One of the General's two friends rose and looked at his watch, and the other rose also. The General excused himself and joined them. Mrs. Vanrennen turned to her young friend and asked if her hair was tidy.

"Isn't it strange—to meet here for the first time for thirty years!"

"For thirty years?" echoed the girl, to whom such a retrospect was the dark backward and abysm of time. "But how did you manage to recognise each other?"

The older woman looked up very pathetically at the young face.

"We haven't changed so very much, you know, dear," she faltered.

The men's voices were heard proclaiming the necessity of retiring early in view of the absurd hour of departure, at which they railed like elderly Britons who consider respect for their physical comfort to be one of the chief ordinances of the Almighty. The General gleefully boasted of the good night's rest in front of him, and crowed over his companions. Then there were leave-takings. The two men went into the hotel, and General Deerhurst rejoined the ladies. Winnie presently bade him good-night and, stooping, kissed Mrs. Vanrennen.

"Give my love to Philip," said the latter, "and tell him how sorry we are for him."

The girl laughed and sped away sylph-like in the moonlight. The General followed her with his eyes till she had disappeared, and then sank into the chair by Mrs. Vanrennen's side.

"Amazingly pretty girl. Charming figure. At first I thought it was your daughter."

"I have no children," she said with a sigh. "Winnie Graves is just a young friend who is accompanying a lonely woman on her travels."

"Are you—lonely?" he asked with a significant pause.

"My husband died ten years ago," she replied.

"I've never married," said he shortly.

There was a spell of silence. The announcement came to the woman both as a reproach biting her heart with sudden remorse, and as a purely feminine, unregenerate joy. A man pays a woman a far higher compliment by remaining a bachelor for her sake than by merely marrying her. There is something heroic about the one, whereas the heroism of the latter soon wears thin.

"Tell me what you have been doing all your life?" she said at last.

He waved a deprecating hand.

"What's there to tell? I've been in India most of the time. Looking back, it





"In the cherry orchard."

W. W. W.

doesn't seem long. I've seen no end of people die, and their children get married and produce babies. I've also developed gout and a taste for Roman antiquities."

"You never thought of marrying?" she asked timidly.

"At first I plunged into my profession. Then I suppose my profession plunged into me. I got into fixed bachelor ways — and now — well — May I smoke?"

He received her permission, selected a cigar from his case, and fumbled in his pockets. Then murmured a petulant "Confound it!"

"What's the matter?" she asked, with a smile, falling into intimacy with happy unconsciousness.



"...her last letter to him."





"That scoundrel of a man of mine," said he, gravely angered, "has forgotten to put in my cigar-cutter."

He found a penknife, however, and having performed the necessary operation, lit his cigar and smoked tranquilly. The fragrance mingled with the hundred sweet odours of the night.

They talked for a while of common things—the stages of his career—his work on the North-West Frontier—her unexciting travels during and since her



married life—the interest of this town of Algiers, where East and West are so subtly interfused yet so sharply divided—the beauty of Mustapha Supérieur, its thousand roses, and its acanthus leaves. He told her also that he had an appointment at ten the next morning with the Governor of Algiers, an old friend, who was motoring him over to the Tombeau de la Chrétienne, the supposed burial-place of Cleopatra, and to Tipasa, whose Roman remains he had never seen. The excursion would last the whole day. Mrs. Vanrennen felt an odd little pang of disappointment.

“We shall meet in the evening, I hope.”

“Of course. I shall look forward to it all day long. I’m sorry now,” said he, “that I’ve pledged myself to go at all. But who could have foretold our meeting?”

“It’s very, very strange,” she said dreamily.

The General puffed at his cigar for a few moments; then he said, bending over to her:

“Molly, you know you treated me damned badly.”

“I suppose I did,” she said with a sigh. “But I treated myself worse—much worse. Men can’t understand these things.”

The picture rose before her of the poor little rectory bedroom—of the corner of the scantily equipped dressing-table where she sat one awful night in her bed-gown and wrote her last letter to him; her hair was falling about her fingers as she wrote and smudged the tears and ink that wet the paper, and she was too numb with misery to care. A tear of self-pity now fell at the memory.

“Why didn’t you wait for me, Molly?”

“I told you in my letter. It’s a poor, tragic old story. You can read it from beginning to end in ‘Auld Robin Gray.’ It’s literally true—every incident—all of it.”

“Then you did think of the poor devil in India?”

“Yes,” she said softly, “I did think of you.”

“Much?”

“Very much.”

She leaned back in her chair and looked up at the mild stars, smiling to herself. How was he to know the agony of longing, the torture of revolt—all the horrors and despairs of a woman? Thank God it was over and done with, buried in the long ago. Her bosom rose and fell with a sigh of relief.

“Yes, I thought of you very much,” she repeated.

“I often wondered whether you were having a bad time. I suppose you did?”

“Don’t let us talk of it now,” she said. “Let us look on it as an evil dream. It is so simple to have you here with me—although you did drop on me from the moon. With a little imagination one might forget that the thirty years have gone by.”

“Pon my soul!” said he, “one might—and if one looks at you, it requires hardly any imagination at all. At first it was strange—devilish strange—to see you; but now—you don’t seem to have altered a bit. By George, what glorious brown hair you had!”

It was with tremulous pride that she told him it was still brown and long—that there wasn’t a white hair in it.

“I wish I could say the same of mine,” he laughed. “But I’ve kept it all. Look.”

He took off his hat with a curious young eagerness and showed a shapely grizzled head. She bent forward and peered at it in the moonlight.

“Oh—Godfrey!” she cried.

“What?”

“You part it in just the same way as you used to. And there are the same little curls over the temples.”

“Do you remember that, Molly?”

It was her turn to ask him whether he thought she could ever forget.

The moon shone full on them, and the stars hung lower in the breathless scented air, as if to envelop them. The man of sixty edged his chair near hers and the woman of fifty-five put her hand in his. They were quite alone on the terrace. The lights on the ground floor of the hotel had been put out. Just a dim gleam appeared far off from the vestibule, and on the second floor immediately above it, a window, Winifred’s, was illuminated. Otherwise the whole dim white stretch lay in darkness and silence. Not a sound from garden, or from road beyond, or from town below, broke the stillness.

The pair, alone in the moonlight, talked in whispers like lovers, held by the witchery of the Southern night. A deep languorous happiness swelled at the woman’s heart. Now and again the white moustache brushed her finger-tips and a thrill ran through her body. The years fell away from her, and she became twenty-five again.

[Continued on page 11.]



“THE HORRID MYSTERY OF THE POOL.”

FROM THE PAINTING BY H. VOGLER.



THE ENCHANTED LAKE.



## THE PERFECT KNIGHT'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

DRAWN BY ALLAN STEWART.



SIR GALAHAD IN QUEST OF THE GRAIL.

Through dreaming towns I go,  
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,  
The streets are dumb with snow.

The tempest crackles on the leads  
And, ringing, spins from brand and mail;  
But o'er the dark a glory spreads  
And gilds the driving hail.

—TENNYSON.



*[Continued from page 8]*

"Till now," said the General, "I've never realised how lonely I've been."

"Poor Godfrey," she said with a comforting squeeze of his fingers.

"But we've found each other again, Molly. It's wonderful, isn't it?"

"God is good. I never dreamed I should have this great happiness."

"I have dreamed of it often," the General declared. And then, in a lyrical outburst of self-delusion he vowed that never a day had passed but that he had thought of her and longed for her, that he had never given a passing fancy to another woman; that on the staring, blinding heats of the remorseless plains he had cooled his brain and soothed his heart with the picture of her among the cherry blossoms. And she, in her gentle woman's way, and in her soft musical voice into which lost dove-notes crept insensibly, sang antistrophe in the moonlight pastoral. So they said many old, foolish tender things, and they drew closer and closer together until her cheek rested on his shoulder as it had done in the days when their hearts were young.

A slight sound caused her to start, and they saw the hall-porter appear at the end of the terrace, pause for a second as he looked at them, and then disappear into the vestibule. They laughed with the happy confusion of guilty boy and girl discovered.

"We must go in, I suppose," she said regretfully.

The General took out his watch. "God bless my soul, it's past midnight! How the time has flown!"

She took his arm and they walked slowly down the terrace. The faintest of all possible breezes sprang up and a breath of all the odours of the pale garden came full into their faces. He bent his head and kissed her on the lips.

"Till to-morrow evening," he said at the lift-door.

"Till to-morrow evening. Good-night."

The General returned to the terrace, and walked up and down while he smoked a cigarette. Then he retired to his room on the first floor. As he straightened his body after bending down to insert the key in the lock, he clapped his hand to his back.

"That confounded lumbago!" he muttered. "Serves me right for sitting out in the moonshine."

Mrs. Vanrennen mechanically turned the electric switch as she entered her bedroom, but the sudden glare disconcerting her, she undressed by the moonlight and went to bed. Soon finding sleep impossible, she rose, put on a woollen wrapper, and sat down in the arm-chair by the open window. Below her lay the terrace and the garden chequered with shadow and pale light, in which gleamed duskily the oranges and the palms and the feathery pepper-trees, and the great geraniums and the grey roses, and the mild, grotesque cacti; and beyond these loomed the black mass of trees descending the slope, and over them she could see the strip of plain, and then the great sweep of the silver bay, with Cape Matifou on the east hugging it like a long, tender arm. Beyond the Cape, just discernible against the sky, was the infinitely faint silver tracery of the snow-capped Atlas Mountains. The whole earth lay Endymion to the moon; and the perfumes of the night rose through the warm air. Happy tears welled into the woman's eyes. Love reigned eternally. God was good.

Only a few hours before she had been content to satisfy her elderly woman's sentimental cravings in a girl's sweet romance. Winifred and Philip worshipped her as the dearest creature on earth, because she smoothed paths that were rough, and played fairy-godmother in defiance of an unsympathetic world. In their innocent young hearts they thought it all pure altruism; and she herself, delicate-minded and generous, had never realised till now how personal had been her interest. She laughed to herself—for Life had become one beautiful mellow laugh—and thought how poor and cold she must have been to seek warmth from the glow cast by the love of a boy and girl. Only a few hours ago she had been this chilly soul; and now, by such a miracle as had never happened beneath the moon since water was turned to wine, she was living in the deep, rich splendour of her own romance.

She sat for a long time motionless by the window, in complete surrender of mind and body to the spell. The kiss still quivered on her lips, the tender words lingered in her ears. If death came, she could die happy, having tasted the sweetest that life could give. Her dream was inchoate; all that reached her intelligence was an all-pervading sense of happiness. The marble clock on the mantelpiece striking two aroused her. She started,



and shiveringly realised that the night had grown cold. She rose, intending to go to bed; but as she passed in front of the great gilt mirror she caught a sight of herself—a pale ghost in the dim light. It was a shock, startling her from dream-land into the grey real world. She peered into the glass; but could not see. Then she sat, undecided, on the edge of the bed. Should she be brave, and turn on the light and look at herself, or should she put chilling fancies from her and go to sleep in the dear warmth of her happiness? She felt five-and-twenty. Godfrey had said she had not changed. In his eyes she was five-and-twenty still. He had kissed her as if she had been five-and-twenty. What did it matter?

But she rose, nevertheless, with determination, turned the switch and confronted the mirror. In it she saw a woman of fifty-five.

She closed the window and drew the curtains, so as to shut out the moonlight, and came back to the glass. She stared calmly at herself for a long time. Then she went to bed, and lay awake in the darkness, thinking, thinking. The glamour of the night had gone. The day would bring disillusion. For one perfect moonlit hour she had found her lost youth, and had been desirable in a man's eyes. To-morrow he would see her as the old woman that she was. For one perfect moonlit hour they had been lovers who had kissed with young hearts and young lips. To-morrow they would meet as old folks in the piteousness of their grey hairs and shrivelled bodies and faded cheeks, and the magic would be gone, and not all the strivings of their souls could ever bring back a touch of it. For one perfect moonlit hour the warm scented air of Paradise had enfolded them. To-morrow—Then all the woman's instinct rose imperiously. There must be no to-morrow.

The dawn crept into the room, and with it sounds of tramping men were heard in far-off corridors. A while later there was the scrunch of gravel beneath her window and the sound of wheels. She recognised the hotel omnibus, taking General Deerhurst's friends to the North German Lloyd steamer.

"If only he were going with them, how it would simplify matters!" she thought. Then

she reflected that after last night's happenings he would not have gone.

There must be no to-morrow, no disillusion, no fading of the splendour of her sacred hour into the light of common day. So much was certain. But how should the inevitable morrow be frustrated? Suddenly she remembered General Deerhurst's appointment with the Governor of Algiers at ten o'clock, and the day's excursion to Tipasa. Fate was kind.

When dawn had broadened into daylight, she went into the adjoining room where Winifred Graves lay asleep, the window flung wide open. She paused before waking the girl, and gazed at her, with a queer little clutch at the heart. This, in verity was youth, fairer in the pitiless morning glare than in the softening glamour of the moonlight. Happy youth, which need fear no Philip on the morrow!

Presently the girl woke, conscious of the strange presence.

"Oh, Mrs. Vanrennen!"

"Forgive me for waking you, dear, but I've not slept all night. I wanted to know whether you would mind our starting for England to-day?"

"To-day! Why, what has happened?"

"Nothing," said Mrs. Vanrennen. "I have a sudden craving for home. I am too old to knock about in hotels. You won't think it horrid of me to cut short your holiday like this, will you? I'll try to make it up to you, dear, if I can," she added penitently. "I'll ask Philip to come and spend a few days with us at Bournemouth."

The girl sprang up in bed and threw her arms round Mrs. Vanrennen's neck and kissed her.

"Oh, you dear!" she cried. "I'll begin to pack at once."

Mrs. Vanrennen went back to her own room, greatly relieved at the settlement of her plans. General Deerhurst would be gone for the day by ten o'clock. Meanwhile, Winifred and herself could take the mid-day boat to Marseilles. When he returned in the evening he would find her letter explaining all.

This letter she sat down now to write, in her bed-gown and with her hair about her shoulders, just as she had written to him thirty years ago. But this time there were no tears for the hair to smudge. It was the letter of a woman who had entered for an unexpected





A spring night in the park

hour the gates of Eden; it was the letter of a sweet-souled lady. She was sure that he would understand. If he did not—for, after all, the masculine intelligence is uncertain in its comprehension of subtle things—if he did not, it was for him to follow, an ardent and irresistible lover, on her track. Her conscience allowed her this loophole.

She spent the morning in her room, busily packing, and only went downstairs when it was time to start. So far she had avoided meeting him.

"Will you give this letter to General Deerhurst?" she said to the hall-porter.

"General Deerhurst has gone, Madame."

"I know. But he will be back this evening."

"Pardon, Madame," said the hall-porter. "He started this morning with the other gentlemen by the North German Lloyd steamer. And *justement* he left a letter for you."

He searched in his pigeon-holes and handed her the letter. She took it mechanically, and walked in a dream to one of the little quiet bays in the lounge. She stared at it for a while as it lay unopened in her lap. Then she tore it, unread, into tiny pieces, and threw them into the waste-paper basket.

[THE END.]



The letter of the lady



# COLD CHRISTMAS CHEER FOR THE KNIGHT OF THE ROAD.

DRAWN BY LAWSON WOOD.



THE BITER BIT.



# WHEN WINE'S IN, WIT'S OUT.

DRAWN BY R. CATON WOODVILLE.



CHRISTMAS CHEER USED NOT WISELY BUT TOO WELL.



A CHRISTMAS TURKEY BY HOOK OR BY CROOK.

DRAWN BY GORDON BROWNE.



LIGHT - FINGERED MUST BE LIGHT - FOOTED.



THE CHRISTMAS GUESTS HELP THE SERVANTS.

DRAWN BY FLEMING WILLIAMS.



FLOOR - POLISHING EXTRAORDINARY.



## WHEN TIME STANDS STILL.

DRAWN BY MAX COWPER.



HOLDING HANDS.



**"Queen Rose in a Rosebud Garden of Girls."**



My soul would one day go and seek  
For Roses, and in Julia's cheek  
A riches of those sweets she found  
(As in another Rosamond).  
But gathering Roses as she was,

(Not knowing what would come to pass)  
It chanced a ringlet of her hair  
Caught my poor soul, as in a snare:  
Which ever since has been in thrall;  
Yet freedom she enjoys withal.

—HERRICK.



# FIRESIDE GAMES FOR THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY.



**1. WHISPERING CHRISTMAS SECRETS: A GAME OF ENDLESS VARIATIONS.**

To be played as the players please.

**2. LET'S TALK TO THE BROWNIES.**

Four little boys hide behind sofas and chairs while the others sing:

"Hist, hist, be still! On tiptoe now advance,  
We've come to have a merry Brownie dance.  
We will make one circle here, stepping lightly, for we fear  
We may wake the sleeping earth, perchance"

At the second line of the song the little boys re-enter the ring and dance.

**3. CHRISTMAS PIE: GUESSING THE INGREDIENTS.**

The children sing: "We're going to make a Christmas pie. (Repeat three times.)  
And what will you put in it?"

Then each describes some material for the pie, and the others guess what it is.  
The child who has most correct guesses receives a pie.

**4. LIVING STATUES.**

A game of infinite variations, which explains itself.

**5. GRANDMOTHER IN THE RING.**

The children dance round "Grandmother," who wears a hood. She chooses one child, to whom she gives a sugar plum, and that child in turn becomes "Grandmother."



WEARY WAITING FOR SANTA CLAUS.



THE DUSTMAN INTERVENES

Here comes the Dustman, stepping so softly,  
Stealing along on the tips of his toes;  
And he scatters the sand  
From his own little hand,  
In the children's eyes as he goes.





**The Man in Possession.**

FROM THE PAINTING BY CECIL ALDIN.



A TALE OF TAILORS' CHIVALRY.

DRAWN BY JOHN HASSALL.







A BROKEN GIRTH, A DROPPING SHOT  
AND IN THEIR HANDS I LAY,  
THE CANTING KNAVES: ELSE HAD I NOT  
BEEN CAPTIVE HELD THAT DAY.

AND SINCE MY GODLESS STATE HAD VEXED  
THEIR SOULS, BE-JOYFUL POWER,  
THE RASCAL COLONEL, CHOSE A TEXT  
AND STUNNED ME BY THE HOUR.  
OLD CAVALIER SONG

NO ESCAPE FOR THE PRISONER.

FROM THE PAINTING, "CAPTIVE OF HIS BOW AND SPEAR," BY EDGAR BUNDY.





PICKING OFF THE PICKET.

FROM THE PAINTING BY LAWSON WOOD.



The  
Shield,  
helmet  
& crest  
of the  
Black  
Prince

# Margaret of Angoulême

A Story  
of Guienne

By MAX PEMBERTON.

SO, you see, they have carried away the sword from the Black Prince's tomb in that "fayre church of Canterbury"; and none may tell you where it lies to-day. Some there be who say that Cromwell had it; but deeper

students deny the story, and ask if such a sword should not fitly decorate the shrine of Margaret of Angoulême, or serve in lieu of epitaph for that fine rogue of a man, Bertrand du Guesclin. Ah, this merry villain who saved France from the Plantagenets—this wild wolf of a man, this brigand, this pirate, this father of all outlaws . . . why has history done no better by him? Read upon the scrolls of Cressy and Poitiers the pæans of prince and archer; but you shall not read of Bertrand. The fruits of barren victories, of battles but not of war, the glory of men and arms serve the recorder for his banquet; but not the story of Bertrand du Guesclin.

And yet what a life for some later-day son of Froissart—some probing scholar, who, lantern and muck-rake in hand, will delve where Bertrand ruled; will search the scrip that Spain and France may hide, and say, "This was the true Constable of France, this was the real figure of the Hundred Years' War."

Let me tell you of Bertrand and Margaret of Angoulême, that by one incident in a life of lives your imagination shall answer for the others.

This would have been when Edward's son ruled in Guienne, after that he had defeated the French at Poitiers and seemed to make himself master of all France. Here you shall find no chivalry at all, no warfare that knights should have made; but a going to and fro of a troop of bandits to rapine, robbery, and murder. Was not this great country of the Garonne then, as now, the fairest and richest in all France? Do we not read that the houses of Bordeaux surpassed even those of Paris in their emblems of civilisation and of comfort? A great, spreading, fertile land, the home of nobles and of merchants, of rich vineyards and smiling fields—to this Edward, the Black Prince, carried his wife Joanna, and here that amiable lady must often have wished herself back in England again, when carousal followed upon victory and debauch upon fair fame.

There can be no shilly-shally when these years are to be discussed, nor any talk of Cressy and Poitiers to hide their shame. As a band of guerillas, the Prince's knights spread themselves abroad over fair Guienne; as a troop of outlaws they behaved towards its simple people. Costly plate, rare furniture, splendid carpets, unknown almost in Western Europe at that time, were heaped up in their plunder-wagons. Many a house mourned a daughter as dead; many a wife was carried to the English tents that her husband might live. And this, behold, under the ægis of Edward's son, whose tomb you visit in that "fayre church of Canterbury," whose sword for very shame lies no longer in its scabbard.

Now, all these things were done after that the Black Prince had taken King John a prisoner, and his father had come to believe that he was lord of France beyond all contention betwixt the nations. In truth

he was never further from being lord of that great country; though it was not king or prince who should dispute the sovereignty with him, but the son of a simple soldier of Rennes, who had adventured in many lands, defeated Charles the Bad of Navarre at Cocherel, and been taken prisoner at the battle of Nayera by the very Prince he was so soon to humiliate. This was Bertrand of Guesclin, the bandit soldier, the burner of castles, the destroyer of towns—to the French but half a hero; to the English a very devil appointed by the Powers of Darkness for the undoing of their pleasures.

No longer, now, was this fair game of love and wine to be played in all delight upon the banks of noble Garonne.

Let a Knight of the Silver Spur drag a maid to his tent, and perchance his body would swing from the nearest tree to-morrow. Let the Prince take a fancy to this castle or that; and be sure Master Bertrand would fling a torch at it before the month was out. Skirmish and counter-skirmish, men slaughtered at their love or liquor, soldiers struck down before the altars, towns pillaged, churches burned—this was the campaign they waged in Guienne while Poitiers was upon every tongue and Cressy yet a famous victory. Here spy out a new marvel for the historian. We read of no concerted action upon the part of Edward's son and his knights to rid themselves of a marauder so dangerous. Raids there were, wild foray and counter foray, but of campaigning no true evidence. In truth, the Black Prince appears to have been too well pleased with the wines and the luxury of the South to have made any move against the merry Bertrand. His one encounter with the famous raider is a story of a woman's passion and a woman's sacrifice. But it does the Prince no great credit, as all the records bear witness.

Now, this would have been when the English Court was kept at Angoulême, and the Lady Margaret of that city passed almost for a saint. Her rare beauty has been sung down through the stories, and we shall not quarrel with the poets who acclaim her. But of her virtue some have been malicious enough to doubt. Certain is it that every

knight in the Black Prince's entourage made love in turn to saintly Margaret, and that the Prince himself, notwithstanding the charms of the gentle Joanna, engaged in a modest but amorous dalliance with her. How far this was carried or to what lengths it might have gone we are not concerned to know; but just at the very moment when the tongues wagged busiest, what should happen but that the Bishop sent Margaret out of the town, and the Prince and his knights were left to mourn her at their leisure.

This was a drastic thing to do, perchance no gallant one; and even the Bishops of those days were not guiltless sometimes of a little

As a troop of  
outlaws they be-  
haved towards its  
simple people.



sacerdotal, if harmless, gallantry. But the Bishop of Angoulême had an excellent, if mistaken excuse when the Prince charged him with the banishment of the amorous Margaret.

"There are those among her kinsmen," said he, "who have to do with the outlaw Guesclin. My honour owes it to your Highness that she shall dwell no longer in Angoulême."

This was vague enough and far from satisfying to the Prince, who knew very well that the Bishop had acted prudently, and that there were other and more valid reasons for the banishment of the Lady Margaret. The daughter of one of the oldest nobles in Guienne, the

wife of that Count of Libourne who had been slain at Poitiers, Margaret had many houses to



The good Bishop had chosen a pretty place enough for my lady's orisons.

which she might betake herself; and the Black Prince,

we may imagine, was not displeased to discover her whereabouts presently, and put her loyalty to the test. This he did just a month after he had quitted the town, and so secretly that none but his faithful servitor, John of Abingdon, was able to give a true account of that adventure.

There had been hunting in the forest all day, we read, and toward sunset the ride had carried the company toward the Hermitage, where dwelt an ancient man sufficiently holy and sufficiently dirty to justify the favour and the patronage of the devout. This worthy, with his wonderful gift of plain speech and of prophecy, attracted some of the knights to his hut as much in the spirit of revelry as of the true religion; but the Prince himself slipped away with John of Abingdon, and, losing himself cleverly, he came out at last before the old Castle of Charras, and seemed to remember, as though by accident, that Margaret of Angoulême had taken refuge therein.

"Did not the good Bishop speak of this as my lady's retreat?" he asked the honest fellow at his side—and was answered as readily.

"He thus spoke of it, Highness—but not a retreat for any other when the sun is setting and Bertrand du Guesclin may be abroad."

"Tell me not of such things," rejoined the Prince sharply, "Bertrand was at Aigre three days gone—who shall look for him at Charras? Go wind your horn and say that I am here."

Old John of Abingdon knew his master too well to hesitate upon such a precise command. And yet he liked the look of the place but ill. They were in the heart of the forest here. Giant oaks bent crippled boughs downward to the melting turf, which, in its turn, showed great patches of the golden sunshine, as though they had been dropped from a mighty brush in the heavens above. Continuing vistas of glade and dell opened on every side; a little river ran laughingly by the very walls of that bleak tower they called the Castle, and was spanned by a bridge the Romans builded. Save for the baying of the hounds and the murmur of insect life, no sound intruded upon the bewitching silence of the forest. The good Bishop had chosen a pretty place enough for my Lady's orisons, it would appear—and so the Prince thought while he waited for his answer. A rendezvous more secluded no lover had desired.

"Well, and what say they?"

"That my Lady is not here, Lord Prince."

"A lie, a barren lie; answer that I will even enter and prepare for her return."

And then a little pause again, and the doffed cap and the face of honest John drawn down in melancholy.

"She is here, Lord, but she would that it were any other than your Highness."

"The better reason which shall take us in. Was there ever a

woman that knew her mind yet? Stable my horse where he shall stand to my hand—and, hark ye! your place is at the wicket, where a winded horn shall call me to my senses if the need arise."

John of Abingdon nodded sagely, and was not displeased that his Prince should contemplate no long delay nor be insensible to those words of wisdom which he himself had spoken. The Prince, upon his part, found my Lady in the private apartment of the Castle, a considerable lodging beyond the donjon keep, and furnished with no little elegance in a day when elegance had little to do with any dwelling-house. Here, as the old chronicle tells us, he did obeisance to her, and here he discovered upon the instant that guilty secret which had carried her to the forest.

A man stood by my lady's chair, and, deep as were the shadows within the great apartment, the Prince recognised him for no other than Bertrand du Guesclin, the mighty freebooter whom his armies had sought so long in vain. To one less brave than Edward's son there would have been all the omens of a snare here—armed men hidden, and this pretty Delilah to do him a mischief. But the Prince knew Margaret of Angoulême; he believed, which was the truth, that she loved him; and if his love of her were less to be reckoned upon, at least his indifference might play no coward's part. So, we hear, he bowed to the Constable, and spake a fair message.

"Madame," he said discreetly, "you find me lost at your gate, and my servants in no better case—so let this be my offence to beg wine and bread until all be ready to ride on again."

"Lord Prince," she rejoined, "so much I give willingly if your departure may thereby be hastened, for here is no fit house for your Highness to abide."

"Nay, nay—since you are here, lady, there shall be no fairer house in France." And then he said, looking the Constable full in the face, "I speak plainly before this gentleman, whose presence evidently is unwelcome to you."

"No, no, Lord," she cried; "Monsieur du Guesclin was my father's friend."

"And will go or come at the bidding of none," added the freebooter impudently.

He stepped forth from the shadows and laid a heavy hand upon that famous sword by which so much glory had come to the name of Guesclin. No element of tragedy was lacking to that scene of passion and of hate—no element save a man's homage to a woman who loved him and a word spoken as none but a king might speak it.

"In my lady's presence, Sir," said the Prince, "such argument is unseemly. There are wider fields whereon it shall be held to some advantage. Let Madame say the word—I will go or stay as her wish shall be."

"My Lord," she said quickly, "there is no house which would receive you so willingly at any other time than this—"

"You wish me to leave you, Madame?"

She would have answered him "Yes"; the word was already upon her tongue, when a coarse laugh from the freebooter at her side changed the impulse and betrayed all her fear of him. So much



the Prince divined—so much, for the time being, he was willing to believe.

This Bertrand du Guesclin had forced her house, and she stood helpless in his hands.

And just as the measure of his curiosity had been probed by her absence from the town, so was a latent passion awakened by this desire of possession upon the part of another. Now for the first time in all his life the Prince perceived how very beautiful this noble lady was. The wonderful softness of her

The Prince himself slipped away with John of Abingdon.



skin, the shapely neck, the abundant auburn hair curled in threads of gold about her shoulders, the little hands and feet, the amorous eyes—all these provoked a man but yesterday unprovoked by her, and thrust him still upon her unwilling hospitality.

"I perceive that you wish me to leave you, mistress, when this gentleman shall be willing to accompany me," he said. "Let him deny it not, for thus is the truth. He has put the word into your mouth, but it is a bitter word and you like it not. So shall I answer for you and even venture to loosen the cloak from my shoulders. There are friends enough of mine at your gate should you have need of them."

Bertrand du Guesclin, they say, laughed loudly at this; for well he knew that no escort had followed Edward's son to Charras.

"So many," cried he, "that a manchete of bread shall suffice them and a second bottle go untasted. Let my Lord look me in the face and say that it is not so. He comes here with John of Abingdon as I with the Sieur of Marney. Nay, Lord Prince, do you deny it?"

shall suffice if you do go speedily. But an you go not, by God's word I will hang you from the nearest tree."

He had turned to the door and there listened impatiently. As for Margaret of Angoulême, she who loved this English lord so well, what thoughts were in her heart when she heard the message which the forest now spake to them and knew that her lover would abide with her? Did she foresee the moment when she might tell the Prince how this Bertrand du Guesclin had come to her house by treachery, how she had dissembled for very prudence' sake, and how she had feared and suffered in the hours of the doubt? Or did her woman's wit read the omens truly? The narrative tells us that she stood white and afraid between them—that she uttered no word, even when a great cry rose up, and all heard the savage shouts which betrayed the outlaw's band.

"My Lord," says Bertrand suavely, "there is some error here—for I do plainly perceive that these be men of my company, and not those



Here, as the old chronicle tells us, he did obeisance to her, and here he discovered upon the instant that guilty secret which had carried her to the forest.

"I deny it not," exclaimed the Prince, turning upon him scornfully; "I come with John of Abingdon; but an you speak no softer, Sir, there are those at my call who will ride here for very curiosity."

"Bringing, Lord Prince, men of mine who shall not be less curious."

He drew a step nearer to the Prince, and once more laid his hand upon his sword. God knows what would have befallen but for my lady's prudence; but she, clapping her hands suddenly, brought two of her servants to the room and they began to spread the table as though they were prepared and the delay unexpected. When next we have a picture of the apartment, it is one of a hall lighted by many tapers, adorned by rare plate and odorous of good cooking. And there is my lady, white and frightened, between two who have desire of her; and neither speaks of riding forth again. This would have been about the hour of ten o'clock of the night. It was half an hour later when a horn, winded in the forest, brought the Prince to his feet and left Bertrand du Guesclin as curious a man as any in Guienne that night.

"Sir," said the Prince with much dignity, "I do perceive that a certain curiosity has got the better of my servants, even as I feared it would be. Fear nothing, however, for I have broken bread with you and will do no treachery. North or south, any sanctuary you name

honourable friends whose coming would have given you so much satisfaction. Is it not so, Lord Prince?"

"It is so," said the Prince—but so disdainfully that my lady trembled for his very life.

"And being so, Highness, it is you who shall go forth to sanctuary, or hang upon one of yonder trees before the hour is old."

"I go not, Bertrand—call them in that they may obey you."

"Nay, nay," cried my lady, her eyes wild with terror and all the colour fled instantly from her face, "you will go, Lord, because I wish it."

"You wish it, Madame—lies this wish in love of me?"

"Nay," she rejoined, "in love of him who was my father's friend."

And so she turned and, as the old narrative tells us, put her arms about Guesclin's neck, kissed him upon both cheeks, and bade him abide.

Thus did a woman drive her lover forth shamefully that she might save him from his enemy. But this is the greater wonder that the Prince rode forth believing her to be wholly a wanton and unworthy, and knowing nothing of any other story until the very minstrels sang it in their ballads, and no cup was lifted in the English camp but first had served the memory of Margaret of Angoulême.

[THE END.]



# The KING'S ORCHARD

By MARJORIE BOWEN

ILLUSTRATED BY A. FORESTIER.

AUGUSTINE, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, leant against the bare white wall of his room in the palace of the King of Kent. The chamber was in shadow, but through the deep, square window showed the King's orchard, ablaze with sun; the gnarled trees, a grey green, bent to the grass under the vivid golden apples; through the yellow, burning leaves the sky showed in strange little shapes of bright blue; the room was close with the odour, faint and sweet, of apples.

At a desk in a corner sat a slender clerk in a gown as white as the wall behind him; in front of him lay an open vellum book, and his pale face was intent on a curious purple wild-flower, with a mottled petal curled over like a lip, that he had before him in a green glass. A reed pen was in his hand, and about him little saucers of liquid colours.

The only sound was a robin, singing harshly in the apple-boughs without.

Augustine picked up a little book of hours from the low bench beside him, and turned over the pages, stiff with plated gold, silver, and much fine painting of prayers and embroidery of flowers. As the parchment rustled under his fingers, the door opened, and there entered Fabricius, the brother of the Archbishop, treading softly. In the glowing cool whiteness of the room, his figure showed richly dark; his fine silk-woven clothes were of dull orange, purple, blue, and green, his girdle of heavy, rough gold stones, linked with curious carvings. He smiled at his brother in the pleasant, sleepy manner he had, and seated himself on a stool and leant his dark head against the white wall.

"You write to his Holiness?" he said.

"I have written, certainly," answered Augustine.

The black eyes of Fabricius turned to that picture framed by the deep-set windows, the riot of flaming apples, the burning blue, and the robin hopping on the boughs that bent above the golden grass.

"You had good tidings to send, verily," he said. "So Kent hath been converted, even easily," he laughed. "How many, brother, followed the example of the King?"

"Even ten thousand," said Augustine. "Nearly all the people of Kent."

"It was easy," answered his brother. "Now, by St. Honor, I would not have it so. Lo! the time hangeth wearily—these pagans leave their old gods carelessly—where is our work?"

Augustine frowned.

"Kent is not Britain, certainly. Lo! there are other kingdoms," he said. "Those will we convert presently."

Fabricius looked from the apple orchard to his brother.

"The Prince of Northumbria—he who complaineth the King of Mercia hath seized his dominions, he who demanded help

from the King of Kent earnestly—what of him?"

Augustine was silent. Fabricius laughed.

"The good King said to him, 'Lo! hate I Ethelfrid of Mercia perfectly—stole he once my daughter. I will aid ye—even I—but first ye must worship the god of the Romans; and the Prince of Northumbria swore on his sword-hand he would serve any god faithfully—yea, even an ugly little wooden god or an evil, vicious god, so the King of Kent would help him to his throne.'"

Fabricius laughed again. The clerk looked up from his painting and brushed away a yellow butterfly (that had drifted in through the wide window) from his white sleeve.

Augustine beat his hand with a soft impatience against the arm of his chair.

"It is no matter for jest," he said. "Nay, nor for laughter. Have we not here a means of converting Northumbria—which is, I think, a great kingdom?"

"And a pagan is King of it!" answered Fabricius. "Even Ethelfrid of Mercia—and this poor Prince is a beggar."

He smiled down at his shapely brown hand, where the butterfly had settled.

"This Prince must be helped," said Augustine imperiously, "with men and arms heartily—for the sake of Rome; the King of Kent is willing."

"He offered his help gladly—yet his is a little kingdom compared to Mercia—and lo! is not this butterfly marked even wonder-

fully—with rings and a great purple eye in each wing? 'Tis a Prince, I think—in robes of State."

Augustine turned his keen eyes sharply on his brother.

"Leave thy fooling, Fabricius—this is a thing must be viewed seriously. Lo! I must even to the King now—'tis near the time." He rose. "Octavian, leave thy book and follow me."

The butterfly fluttered away out of the window. Augustine, the Archbishop, left the chamber with the clerk behind him.

The stillness of the sunny afternoon was almost oppressive. The Knight rose and went to the desk where the unfinished book lay.

The lines for the lettering were ruled in faint red across the page, which was wreathed with a border of flowers and angels.

Fabricius compared the copy of the curious purple blossom with the original in the green glass, and so intent was he on this that he did not notice that the door had been very softly opened and shut, and that a woman was gazing at him. She was tall, her gown was of light blue, and was girdled close under the bosom by a silver belt; a silver net confined her pure gold hair; she was as rose-white and fair

(Continued on page 32.)



At a desk in a corner sat a slender clerk.



He smiled at his brother in the pleasant, sleepy manner he had.



## THE SACRED BOUGH OF YULE.



CUTTING THE MISTLETOE IN DRUIDICAL DAYS.



as flesh may be, and her eyes were of the colour of the brilliant azure that shone through the apple-leaves in the King's orchard.

As she moved slowly across the floor he heard her footstep, and turned:

"Brice!" he said.

Her laugh broke out delightfully.

"Did leave the court so suddenly?" she said.

"I was wearied by Cadwalla the Prince of Northumbria's talk, verily."

Brice, Earl Redwald's daughter, came nearer.

"Was it because he smiled at me?"

She rested her round elbows on the top of the desk and looked down at him.

"Now, by St. Honor," said Fabricius, "I did not know he smiled at you."

Her red lips pouted.

"He did—is he not a well-looking Prince? Does he not always smile at me?"

"Oh, verily," smiled the Roman.

"And as I stood behind the Queen's chair to-day, he looked at me—oh, constantly, and smiled——" She glanced at Fabricius covertly.

"And have I not looked at you—oh, constantly?" he answered—"and have I not smiled?"

She came round the desk. Fabricius took hold of her two white, soft hands, and gently drew her down beside him on the bench.

"You are like the apples without," he said. "All golden, sun-warm, and fair, Brice."

He still held her hands, and kissed them as he spoke.

"Art bold," said Earl Redwald's daughter.

"I am not bold enough," he answered, "or it had been thy lips, certainly."

He let go of her hands and leant forward on the desk among the reed pens and saucers of colours.

"Brice," he said, "how long have you been a Christian, truthfully?"

"Ever since my lord came to court," she replied, looking away.

"A month!" he laughed. "Art a pagan at heart now, certainly."

She shook her head.

"No—am a good Christian, in verity."

Fabricius picked up one of the pens, smiling.

"Look at this fair book, Brice."

Her blue eyes lifted to his and glanced at the open page before her.

"Prayers, Brice; could you read them?"

She bent over the book.

"Oh, 'tis a picture of the little flower!" Her rosy finger rested on the page; she looked up in delight. "It is like—even wonderfully."

Fabricius of Ravenna was gazing at her.

"I will paint you, Brice, under the flower—before the good clerk returns to finish his angels," he smiled.

"Canst do it?" she questioned. "Paint my face truthfully?"

"By St. Honor—not truthfully," he answered.

With a pen dipped in red he drew an oval among the outlined tracery of angels and blossoms.

"The Archbishop will be angered, bitterly," murmured Brice, "to see a profane creature among holy things."

"Maybe," said Fabricius. "Give me the yellow colour, even hastily, lest he comes."

She obeyed, watching him with a half-frightened interest. He drew her hair and washed it in in pure yellow.

"Is it that colour?" she said breathlessly.

He tinted the oval pink, and while it dried drew in her dress. Brice leant very close to him; her finger-tips were on his arm, the blue gown pressed against his silk sleeve.

"How can I paint your face when you are behind me?" he asked.

"Canst remember me?" she said, bending eagerly over him.

He drew her features; two blue eyes, a red mouth, a straight nose. . . .

"Am not so beautiful," said Brice, with a catch in her breath; he looked up at her sharply; she moved back against the white wall, with her hand on her bosom; it seemed that she was of a sudden pale, Fabricius of Ravenna dropped the pen and rose.

"Would I were back in Ravenna," he said with a half smile.

"Art weary of Britain?" she questioned timidly.

He seated himself in Augustine's chair.

"I know not." He held out his hand. "Come here, Brice."

She crossed the room and stood beside him, leaning against the back of his chair; she gazed round the white room and out upon that picture of the burning orchard.

"Tell me of thy city of Ravenna," she said beneath her breath.

"I cannot in verity." He looked up at her. "Is a holy place—

"The saints that dwell in  
Ravenna  
In white and blue and  
gold,  
Encircle Holy Ravenna  
With blessings manifold.

"When I came back to  
Ravenna  
(Oh, but my heart was  
sore!)  
I beheld the saints of  
Ravenna  
Shine through the  
Abbey door.

"And peace I found in  
Ravenna,  
After the strife in  
Rome,  
And the holy saints of  
Ravenna  
Smiled on my quiet  
home."

Brice stood very  
silent; against the  
shaded, glowing white-  
ness of the wall her  
yellow hair and her  
blue dress showed pale  
and clear.

Fabricius of  
Ravenna rose. In  
the silence his belt  
clinked against the  
dragon on the arm  
of the chair.

Blue eyes met  
black eyes, Roman  
and Saxon gazed at

each other for a troubled second; then he took her in his arms.

"Ah, my lord, my lord!" sobbed Earl Redwald's daughter. Her head sank on his shoulder; he held her for a moment so, neither caressing her nor speaking, but she sobbed in her throat and shook greatly.

At last he set her in Augustine's chair and knelt beside her; she put her hands up over her face and turned her head away.

"Brice!" he said under his breath. "Brice!"

She turned and looked at him in a slow, terrified manner; her blue eyes were as wet flowers. . . .

The door opened roughly; Fabricius sprang lightly and instantly to his feet.

Cadwalla, Prince of Northumbria, came into the room, looking quickly from the man to the woman.

"My brother holds counsel with the King on your behalf, Prince," said the Roman, smiling. Brice sat quiet in her chair, breathing very quickly.

Cadwalla gazed at her; it was obvious that he had come after her. He was very young and hugely made; his hair, golden as Brice's locks, hung in two plaits to his waist after the manner of the Franks; his eyes were light, clear, and fierce; the blue and red of his garments were faded from travelling.

"And by God his grace you are a Christian now, Briton?" asked Fabricius.

(Continued on page 34.)



She rested her round elbows on the top of the desk.



# CHRISTMAS THE TIME WHEN EVERYONE UNBENDS.

DRAWN BY C. H. TAPPS.



CRACKER - TIME AFTER DINNER.



"For a price," answered Cadwalla. "Lo! shall I not forsake the gods who forsake me? Let but your God serve me with men and horses, and him will I worship."

He put his great hand moodily to his dagger and cast his eyes on the ground.

"How easily these pagans leave their faith!" cried Fabricius. "By St. Honor, you would make no martyrs, Briton."

Cadwalla looked up.

"No; nor any slaves, Roman," he answered. "Ethelfrid of Mercia hath my kingdom—am to serve at his footstool or beg abroad? Because Thor hath turned not, if I may I will find a god greater than Thor."

Brice, with the instinct that one man was contemptuous and the other angry, broke in—

"The King hates Ethelfrid mightily. Lo! for he stole the little Princess—and hath kept her in heathen ways."

She rose, and Cadwalla's gaze was upon her; but Fabricius of Ravenna looked indifferently at the robin in the apple-boughs.

"Earl Redwald's daughter," said the Prince of Northumbria.

"Yes?" she said; and because he stared at her so boldly and fiercely, the colour fled from her cheeks.

"Art beautiful," said Cadwalla.

"Oh, no!" She shrank away. "Shouldst not be here—will go."

"Art afraid of me?" demanded Cadwalla, stepping towards her.

She crept swiftly round the white wall and to the door; with her fingers on the latch she answered humbly:

"No, but will go now."

The door closed on the flutter of her blue gown. Fabricius looked round.

"By St. Honor, you are a rough wooer, Briton."

Cadwalla folded his arms and lifted his fresh-coloured young face.

"Kings and princes do not woo, Roman," he said haughtily.

"In Britain," added Fabricius.

The Prince of Northumbria fingered the gold bracelet on his right arm.

"The damsel is beautiful," he said, and raised his eyes, keen and bright as steel. "Will make her Queen of Northumbria."

"You move quickly, Briton," answered Fabricius, and his short lip curled. "Hast been in Kent but two weeks."

"Will have it in the treaties, certainly," said Cadwalla. "Will honour them through this Kentish maid."

Fabricius spoke softly: "And Brice?"

Cadwalla of Northumbria stared.

"What of her?" he demanded.

"If she should not care, even greatly, to take thy crown?"

Cadwalla's eyes blazed; his look bespoke hate of the Roman and scorn of his mission.

"Art not my councillor, no, nor my friend nor my equal, Roman."

He swept up to the desk, the steel links of his corselet rattling.

"Nor am ever like to be," said Fabricius lazily.

"Keep thy speech till I command it," flashed Cadwalla. "I came not for help to thee!"

Fabricius turned swiftly to face him.

"Now by the Virgin, I take no high words from thy kind, proud pagan," he said, and his dark face was flushed. "Nor do I brawl like a Frankish boor."

The Prince of Northumbria hesitated a moment, then fell back a step and turned on his heel, leaving the room in an angry, still silence.

When he was alone Fabricius came forward into the room impetuously, and his dark brows frowned. The sun had faded to its setting,

and the room was full of dusky shadows. Fabricius went up to the desk, and taking one of the painter's rags, rubbed the portrait of Brice until it was a mere smear on the page, then fell to walking up and down the narrow room.

The shadows settled into dark, and still he paced to and fro; then the latch was timidly lifted, and Earl Redwald's daughter crept in, her eyes red with weeping.

He stood still at sight of her; she ran across the floor and fell at his feet.

"Save me!" she said faintly, and caught his hand and humbly kissed it. "He has asked for me—save me!" He raised her up.

"Shouldst not have come," he whispered. "They will watch thee now, Brice."

"Save me! Save me!"

He fetched a quick breath.

"From him?" he asked. "He will make you a Queen, Brice."

"Hate him, mightily. Cannot go with him—cannot."

The shadows deepened with the sinking sun: Fabricius stood mute a moment, looking down into the dim oval of her face.

"Lo!" she said, speaking very quickly, "the King and Cadwalla march for Northumbria, even hastily—in three days or four; and before they go Cadwalla will be baptised and marry me. Lo! he hath but now spoken to my father, who rejoiceth, for he is a Prince, truthfully; but I——"

She stopped suddenly.

"But I love my lord," she said.

Then she fell to her knees and put her arm over her eyes.

"Let my lord forgive me," she murmured sobbing.

"Brice, Brice!" He swung her on to her feet. "Shalt not go—no! by St. Honor!"

"Footsteps!" she whispered suddenly.

He listened. "No one, certainly," he said, after a pause.

"Thought I heard one without," murmured Brice, trembling.

In that second's pause a number of things, painful and confusing, rose in the mind of Fabricius and shamed him. It was ever his habit to mock at himself, and sometimes, too, at others; his impulse dead, he scorned it; therefore, when he spoke, it was with a laugh.

"Brice"—he moved away from her towards Augustine's chair—"we are behaving even foolishly."

"Do not understand," she said, wide-eyed.

He thought her dim-seen face seemed that of a child, and said in his heart, "What is she but a pagan maid, very simple?" Aloud he said, smiling—

"Oh, Brice, thou art not for me, but even for Cadwalla; he is of thy nation, thy manners, but I——"

"But thee I love," she said, in a wondering manner.

Her very earnestness made him discredit her.

"Thou knowest not," he answered gently; he lifted his hand to his heart, and the rings on his fingers flashed dully. "Thou art very young—thou wilt be Queen of Northumbria."

He smiled again, and lifted his dark eyes from the arm of the chair to her face.

Earl Redwald's daughter stood silent a space, gazing at him. At length she spoke, with great breaths between her words.

"Do not care for me," she said, and her bosom heaved dangerously.

"Brice!"—he used her name tenderly—"thou dost not understand."

"Oh—understand": she answered; her head drooped.

She turned away from him.

[Continued on page 38.]



She moved slowly across the floor.



Cadwalla, Prince of Northumbria, came into the room.

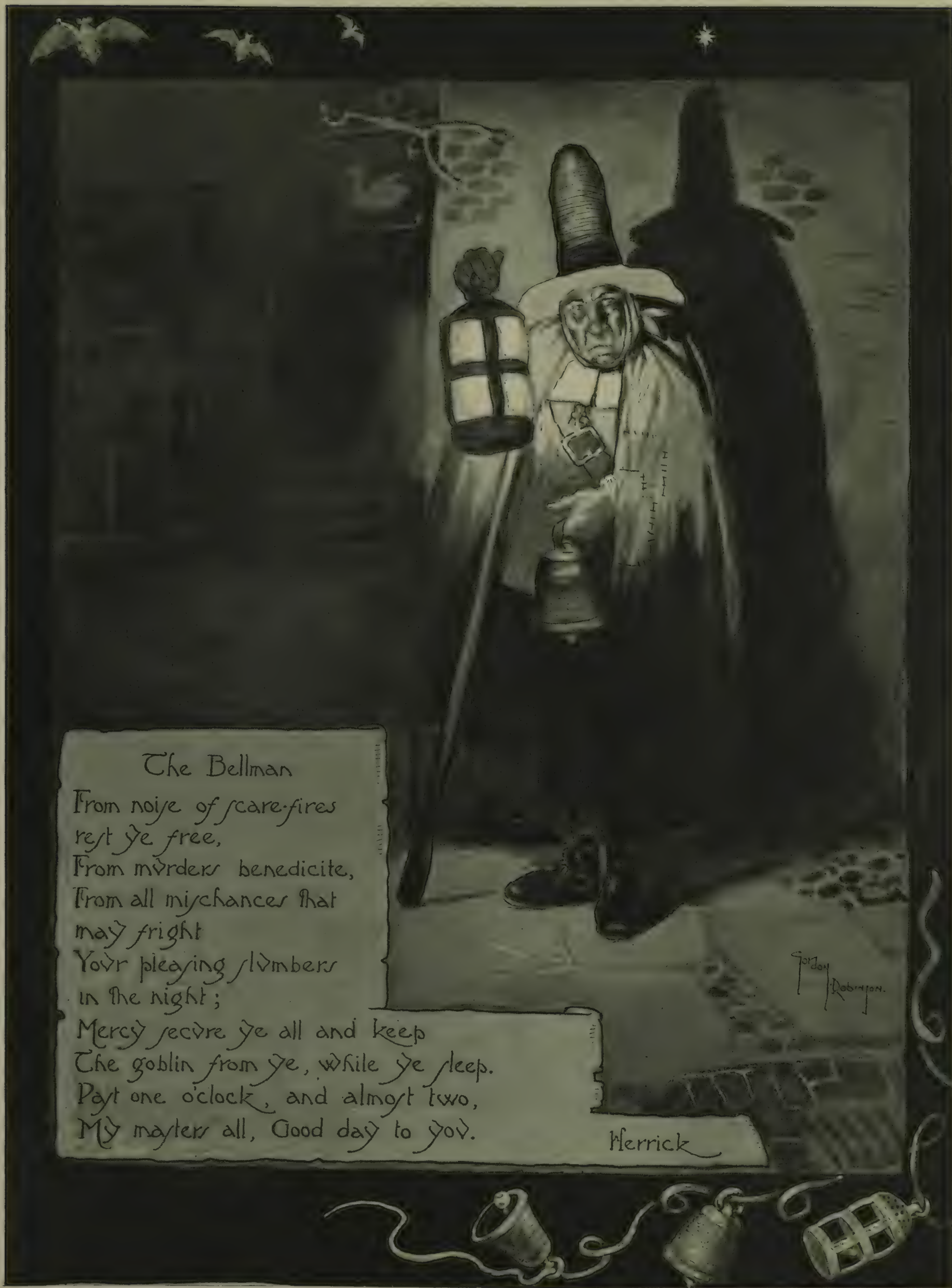


He looked up at her sharply.



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My mayters all, Good day to yov.

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## WHERE GHOSTLY MOONLIGHT FALLS.

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"THE OWL AND THE BAT INHABIT THERE."





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"Cadwalla is a mighty Prince," said Fabricius. He moved from the chair, and as his dress caught the last light from the window, it glistened with shifting gold and bronze; a jewel that held his cloak at the round throat glittered with green fire. Brice looked over her shoulder.

"Lo!" she replied. "Perchance it is better that I take Cadwalla of Northumbria willingly; all desire it—my father, and the King, and thy brother—and thou—"

He was surprised and gratified at her quiet submission and the quickness of her decision, yet the mockery he could not repress in himself rose higher in his heart.

"Thou hast chosen wisely," he said. "It is the better thing for thee, verily."

"And you?" asked Earl Redwald's daughter. "And you?"

At the tone of her voice and the little half movement she made towards him, the colour rose in his face, and he felt the touch of passion spurning at his cold prudence.

But he was a Christian knight, and at times the thing lay heavy on him, as now, when he must reflect how he would embroil them all and bring scandal on his faith if he interfered between the maid and her kin.

"And I?" he answered steadily. "I do what my honour and our Lady bid me do." He kissed the splendid crucifix hanging at his breast, and added under his breath: "Not, O Brice, what my heart desires."

"Have a cruel God," said Earl Redwald's daughter. She spoke evenly, almost coldly. "And I am fallen weary, suddenly—also they will search for me."

She moved to the door with a gentle sound of her gown on the stone floor, and he could find no fitting word to say of either gaiety or sadness. And while he strove to command some speech, she was gone and he alone in the dusk.

After a little, he laughed.

"Lo! she doth not care," he said to himself, and he left the chamber.

He passed the great hall, where they were busy preparing for the feast to be held to-night in honour of the Prince of Northumbria, for the King had lately obtained the consent of the Witenagemote, and in a few days the armies of Kent would march against Mercia.

The long tables were spread with a rude magnificence; silver lamps brought from Italy cast haloes of light on the painted beams of the ceiling, and doors, chairs, and walls were wreathed and hung with heavy garlands of flowers—drooping poppies and daisies, boughs of late beech, yellow and golden, and the shining fruit of the rose.

Serving-men were laying food from great osier baskets; a group of dogs, snapping at each other, followed at their heels.

Fabricius of Ravenna, thinking of great Byzantine feasts by the light of a thousand lamps, smiled with a courtly disdain as he passed to his chamber.

His window looked over the King's orchard and the town of Canterbury; and as he entered the room he saw the last of the sun as it sank in crimson behind the autumn woods of Kent.

He stared at the fading sky and the few paling clouds that drifted upwards into space. Great warmth and stillness were abroad, and a blue haze of smoke lay over the roofs of Canterbury.

Fabricius turned an idle gaze to where the site of the new wooden church was to be, and where, even now, the commands of Augustine and the zeal of the converted King had levelled the ground, brought great logs from the forests, and gathered the workmen who were to build this temple in honour of the new God.

And in his heart he kept saying:

"She doth not care."

When the sun was a mere stain behind the dark tracery of the trees he turned to the room again, and sent his page to the King to excuse his presence at the feast; and when the boy returned he questioned him about Earl Redwald's daughter, and on hearing that she sat beside Cadwalla in fine garments and laughed, twisting vine-leaves round his cup, the Roman said again in his heart, with an unreasoning touch of contempt—"She doth not care!"

The page lit the lamp in his very splendid chamber, and a yellow light fell over dark tapestries and golden objects, a crucifix, a statue of St. Honor, and his magnificent armour glittering on a purple couch.

"Close the window," said Fabricius, "for it bloweth cold." And as the page obeyed he saw great stormy night-clouds rising above the woods.

"It will rain," said Fabricius idly, and he yawned. They could hear the sounds of the feast rising faintly, the hurrying to and fro of the serving-men, the clatter of the goblets, the laughter and the song. Fabricius sat silent a little space, staring at the golden crucifix; a great weariness came over him: he lay down in his jewelled clothes and slept, with the distant murmur of the Saxon feast in his ears.

As suddenly he awoke, with a great sense that someone was calling him; it was utterly dark, save for the little red lamp hanging under the crucifix, and utterly silent save for the heavy sound of rain without.

Fabricius sat up on the couch and listened, wondering at his sudden waking. In the sombre light he could discern his little page asleep on a cushion in the corner, and, dimly, all the familiar objects of the room.

Still utter silence, save the sweep of the rain. He rose softly, not wishing to rouse the boy, and went to the window; slowly and quietly he

unbolted the cumbrous shutters, and pushed them wide: the cold rain dashed in his face, and he stared on to a starless night; he waited, holding the shutters open, he listened—for what he could not have told, save that his heart was beating thickly.

He leant from his window and strove to pierce the utter blackness;

[Continued on page 40.]



"Save me!" she said faintly.



The colour fled from her cheeks.



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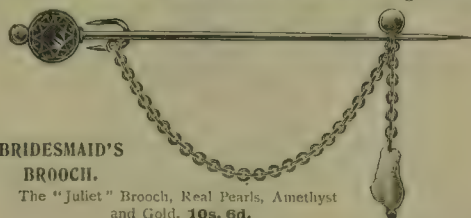
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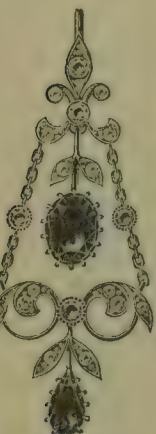


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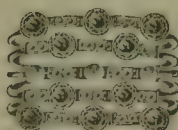
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he thought the cry had come from the orchard below. . . . Bolting the window again, he turned into the room, picked up his sword from beside his armour, and took the lamp from before the crucifix. The sleeping page never stirred; steadily came the loud sound of the rain.

Fabricius went softly to the door and out upon the stairway; the lamp he carried cast waving haloes of pale-red light and dimly lit his way down the wooden stairs.

He came to the guest-hall, and pushing wide the open door, entered.

The air was heavy with the perfume of wine-soaked wood, and the heavy odour of mead; wreaths of dead flowers lay among the fallen goblets and disarranged benches—evidently the feast was but just over. Swiftly he traversed the hall; he found the door leading into the orchard open and unguarded; the rain was driving in over the floor and the fallen flowers.

Fabricius stepped into the orchard.

The tall wet grass encumbered his feet; the rain beat on his uncovered head, and the wind caused the lamp-flame to flicker fitfully.

Utter darkness save for that feeble red light, and utter silence save for the rush of the rain on the apple-leaves.



Their short swords were out and crossed.

"Who called me?" asked Fabricius hoarsely. "Who called?" No answer, and he pursued his way, holding the lamp high: by its light he could see the trunks of the trees, the beaten grass and flowers, looking strange and ghostly—but nothing else. He paused.

The lamp showed him the trunk of an apple-tree, a clump of yellowing grass studded with broken ox-eyed daisies and strewn with wet, bruised apples, and the straight line of the drenching rain; beyond, the dark.

He moved a step forward, stumbling, and his straining eyes saw come into the circle of the lamplight something blue and gold, an arm, white and bare. It was Brice, Earl Redwald's daughter.

He saw the wet, fallen apples about her feet, her white feet that were almost hidden in the sorrel and tangled grass.

"Brice—Brice! it is a wild night," muttered Fabricius, and knew not what he said.

Suspending the lamp by its golden chain, he looked at her.

In the faint light the gold of her hair glittered, and the green stones in her bracelet and the woven threads of his garments; and the rain beat down the dead apple-leaves upon them and dripped from his sleeves.

"Oh, hast come, Roman," she said.

[Continued on page 42.]



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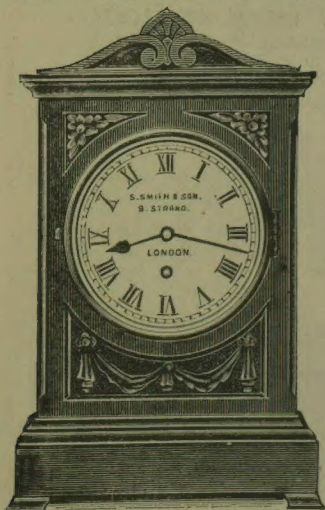
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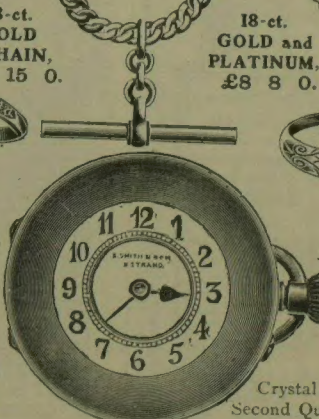


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"Ye called me!" The lamp shook in his hand.

"Nay"—she lifted her wild, rain-wet face—"my heart cried aloud, verily—yet you did not speak."

"Brice! Brice! What do you here?"

"Lo! fly from the King's court—will to the swineherd's wife in Thanet who was my nurse—this because hate Cadwalla, verily—after the feast told him that—so am fled from him now—for he will kill me, certainly."

The palest glimmer of a watery dawn began to reveal the dripping apple-boughs; the Saxon looked at the Roman with undismayed eyes.

"After the feast went to the Queen's chapel to see if the new God had comfort—there came Cadwalla creeping—with a knife—a—ah! I would die—not Cadwalla's way—so fled."

"And ye called to me," repeated Fabricius.

"Nay, looked farewell to my lord's window, but was dumb."

"Yet I heard thee."

Spangled with the pale, wet light of morning and the gold gleam of the lamp, she turned away through the rain, the Christian Knight staring after her.

"Ye must not go," he said hoarsely. It was his duty to take her back to her lord—his duty to his brother and her kin. It was his desire to go with her across the wet woods of Kent; for now he could not say—"She doth not care!"

And on which side lay his duty to his God? Her low, strained voice broke on his distraction.

"Lo! Cadwalla searcheth the dark! Even as the light comes will he discover me."

Fabricius took her round wet wrist. "Ye must not go," he repeated; this time he added—"alone." The rain was ceasing; the heavy grey clouds dispersed before the silver morning.

"He cometh," breathed Brice, staring through the apple-boughs. "I shall kill him, certainly," answered the Roman. "Yea, though he is my brother's friend—and thy lord—presently I shall kill him—"

Softly through the long, wet grass and daisies came Cadwalla of Northumbria, his yellow plaits swinging to his girdle; and when he saw the maid and the Knight facing him, he laughed. Fabricius hung the lamp by its gold chain to the apple-bough and let go of Brice's hand. Their short swords were out and crossed. They did not speak.

And Earl Redwald's daughter leant against the apple-tree, waiting for love or death.

Fabricius thought how much this man's life meant to his brother—the cross in Mercia, the dominion of Rome in Britain.

The stout swords rose and clashed; Brice did not turn away or cry out. And presently Cadwalla of Northumbria fell backwards into the grass. The Roman laid his weapon down and went on his knees beside him.

"Know ye of any God or Spirit?" he asked. "Do ye believe in anything?"

Cadwalla's blue eyes stared up through the apple-leaves.

"In the sword," he answered, and died. The Christian Knight touched the crucifix at his breast.

"Requiem æternam dona ei,

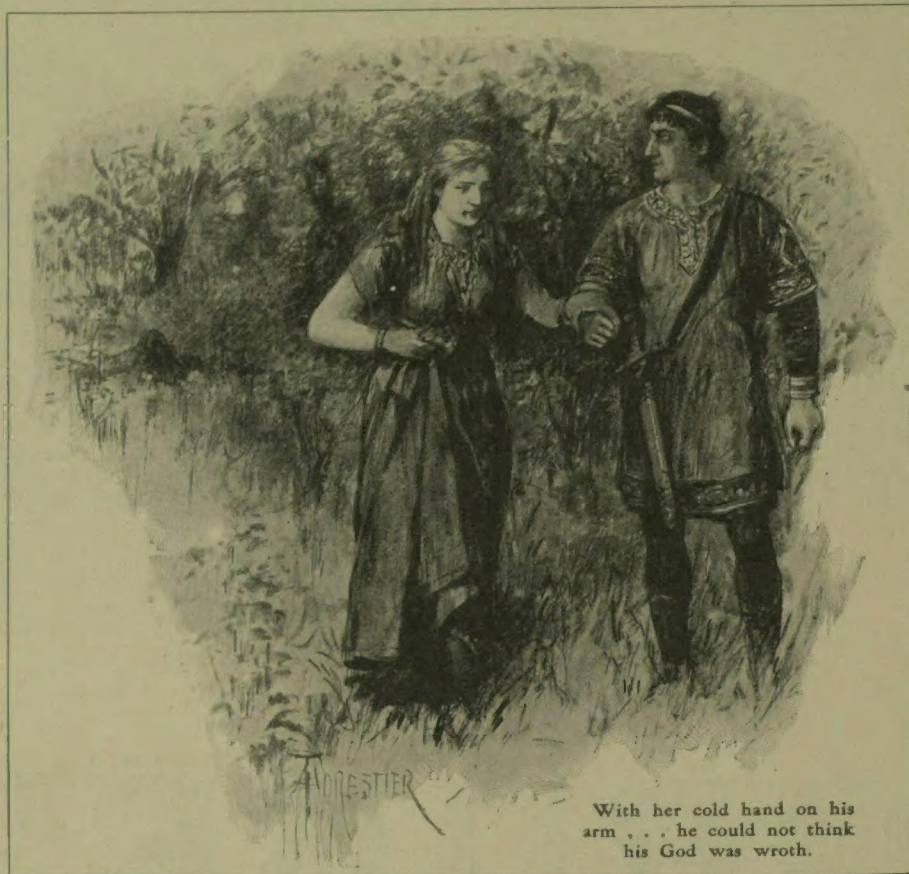
Domine. El lux perpetua luceat ei," he murmured. "Requiescat in pace. Amen."

"Amen!" repeated Brice, and Fabricius rose.

He was an outcast now; he had slain the ally of Christendom; he knew his brother would curse him for it—he knew that Kent and Northumbria would be wroth, but as he turned towards the autumn woods with her cold hand on his arm, turned towards the sea and the long galley that should bear them homewards, he could not think his God was wroth.

And a fair sun rose over the King's Orchard.

[THE END.]



With her cold hand on his arm . . . he could not think his God was wroth.



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